



November 2014 Monthly Veterans' Newsletter

This Veterans Newsletter is compiled and provided by the Seminole County Veteran's Services Office. Its intent is to keep Seminole County Veterans informed about their rights, benefits, and news of interest. It is non-political and, except where noted, all articles are excerpted from outside sources. Local events honoring/supporting Veterans will be included as made available. You are encouraged to provide feedback and recommendations, as this is your Newsletter. Together with my small Team, I hope you find it both valuable and interesting.

Ed Burford, Seminole County Veterans Services Officer

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1. **Seminole County Hero's Memorial.** You are cordially invited to the Seminole County Heroes Memorial Groundbreaking Ceremony. The groundbreaking will take place in front of the Criminal Justice Center on December 2 @ 11:00am. This Memorial is to remember those who made the ultimate sacrifice for this Country , including military, law enforcement and first responders. If you have any questions, please call or email Meloney Lung, 407.665.5277
mlung@seminolecountyfl.gov
2. **Volunteers needed for Fill the Boat.** For the past 4 years the Homeless Services Network and the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary have collaborated to create the "Fill the Boat" Gift Drive. The Homeless Services Network solicits and receives referrals from VA Case Managers of Veterans whom are in the Supportive Services for Veterans/Families and HUD/VASH (VA supportive Housing) programs. Many of the Veterans in these programs have children. The "Fill the Boat" Gift Drive is a clothing and toy drive that supports these requests and gives clothes and toys directly to these children of low-income Veteran families. This year "Fill the Boat" will be on December 13th in Seminole County from 10am to 3pm at the Big Lots, 1101 WP Ball Blvd, Sanford; in Orange County from 10am to 3:30pm at the WalMart, 11250 E Colonial, Orlando; in Osceola County from 10am to 4pm at the Big Lots and K-Mart, 2311 West Vine St, Kissimmee. Would you like to Volunteer? Volunteers are needed to collect and to wrap; e-mail Sean at Sean.gibbs@hsncfl.org to volunteer or for more information. 100% of all donations go directly, there are NO administrative fees; HSN is a 501(c) (3) organization.

3. **Military Recognition Program by Orlando Solar Bears.** – Looking for active military/veterans/guard or reserve personnel from all branches to honor at our home games for the 2014-15 season. The chosen persons will be attending the Solar Bears hockey game, and be featured on camera during 1st period time out. He/she should be in uniform or wear their military branch themed clothing and provide a 2-3 sentence bio. In return, the chosen person will be provided 4 free tickets for that game, 1 parking spot in the Geico Garage. (Additional tickets for friends & family available at discounted rate.) Wheelchair seating available upon request (based on availability); Home games in October - Sat 25, Sun 26 and Fri 31 (Halloween Night.) There are 22 other regular home games and personnel will be needed then too. For information to be considered or to nominate a person, contact Erin at 407-951-8200 x122 ecroce@orlandosolarbearshockey.com or Vickie at 407-380-5386.
4. **Florida Veterans Walk of Honor** was authorized by the Florida Legislature during the 2014 legislative session and was signed into law by Governor Scott on March 31, 2014. The Walk of Honor will be located in the bricked-in area between the old and new capitol, running east and west, and the Senate and House office buildings running north and south. This legislation also authorized the construction of the Florida Veterans Memorial to be constructed on the Capitol grounds. The sale of engraved bricks for the Florida Veterans Walk of Honor will begin immediately. For more information or to purchase a brick, [Read more.](#)
5. **How Florida Became the Most Veteran-Friendly State.** Florida Taxwatch celebrates Veteran's Day, Florida, home to more than 1.6 million veterans, has provided a number of tax and related benefits to veterans and their families, in an effort to become the most veteran-friendly state in the nation. To celebrate Veterans Day, the nonpartisan Florida TaxWatch compiled a list of Florida's veteran-friendly policies. [Read more.](#)
6. **Retention Trouble Looming?** MOAA, October 31, 2014, Senior Army leaders and some members of Congress are beginning to express concern that a confluence of factors could seriously hamper recruiting and retention in the coming years. [Read more.](#)
7. **Military Retirees and Annuitants of Military Retirees.** October 17, Army Echoes is the Army's official newsletter for Retired Soldiers and surviving spouses. Echoes updates the retired community about changes to laws, DOD and Army policies, programs, and benefits that affect them. The newest edition of Army Echoes is now available for downloading at <http://soldierforlife.army.mil/retirement/echoes>.

8. **Air Force Debuts New Service Medal.** *via Military.com, Week of October 20, 2014, The Air Force has released nomination criteria for the new Nuclear Deterrence Operations Service Medal. Service members may be awarded the new medal if they were assigned, deployed or mobilized to a wing, center or below in support of the nuclear enterprise for 120 consecutive days or 179 nonconsecutive days. Eligibility for the medal is retroactive to Dec. 27, 1991. Nominations for currently serving Airmen will be processed through their respective chain of command. Retired or separated Airmen and family members of deceased Airmen can submit a request submitted to the Air Force Personnel Center recognition section for validation. For more information and full eligibility criteria, visit the [myPers website](#). Guard, Reserve, retired and separated Airmen and their family members may contact the Air Reserve Personnel Center at 800-525-0102 for assistance, [Read more](#).*
9. **ABOARD THE FUTURE CARRIER FORD IN NEWPORT NEWS, VA.** — Navy Times, October 26, 2014, Electromagnetic catapults and a soaring \$13 billion price tag get most headlines, but it is a variety of creature comforts and convenience that are making the Navy's next supercarrier a hit with its crew. The future aircraft carrier Gerald R. Ford boasts amenities like smaller berthings, tricked out gyms and loaded lounges, plus many design changes like wider passageways that make the ship more livable. [Read more](#).
10. **Video - 31st Annual Beirut Memorial Observance Ceremony.** The Beirut Barracks Bombings (October 23, 1983, in [Beirut, Lebanon](#)) occurred during the [Lebanese Civil War](#) when two [truck bombs](#) struck separate buildings housing [United States](#) and [French](#) military forces—members of the [Multinational Force \(MNF\) in Lebanon](#)—killing 299 American and French servicemen. The 31st Beirut Memorial Observance Ceremony held at the Beirut Memorial in the Lejeune Memorial Gardens aboard Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, N.C. The special ceremony honored the fallen service members and survivors who served in Lebanon from 1958 to 1984 and in Grenada (October 25, 1983). Major General Richard L. Simcock, the 2nd Marine Expeditionary Brigade commanding general, delivered the Beirut memorial address. Seminole County's Elisa Camara Thompson, who is the author of *American Brother* in honor of her brother lost in Beirut, made a passionate presentation. Watch the 31st Observance Ceremony from Camp Lejeune, NC. [Watch here](#).

11. **Retired and Annuitant Pay October Online Newsletter.** November 2014, from SmartDocs@Dfas.mil, Military Retirees, Annuitants and Former Spouses - The October 2014 Retiree Newsletter is ready for your review. It contains important information about how to access your 1099R for the upcoming tax season, managing your myPay password, updating your email addresses, and administrative updates and changes from our Branch of Service partners. To access the newsletter, please click on the link below. You will find a list of topics for the October newsletter, and you will also have easy access to previous newsletters after you click the link. The links to the newsletter were consolidated into one link for your convenience.
<http://www.dfas.mil/retiredmilitary/newsevents/newsletter.html>
12. **As number of youths eligible to serve shrinks to 3 in 10, Army adapts recruiting strategy.** By Clifford Davis, The Florida Times-Union, Jacksonville (MCT), Oct 27. JACKSONVILLE, Fla. — The U.S. Army now says that seven out of 10 young people between the ages of 17 and 24 are ineligible to become soldiers. The alarming reduction in the pool of prospective soldiers worries Army brass, and they largely attribute it to three issues: obesity or health problems; lack of a high school education; and criminal histories. In fact, with the current educational requirements of a high school diploma, two of the most-decorated soldiers of World War I and World War II, Alvin York and Audie Murphy, would be ineligible to join the Army today. “We’re looking for America’s best and brightest just like any Fortune 500 company out there,” said Lt. Col. Sharlene Pigg, head of the Jacksonville-based 2nd Recruiting Brigade. “We’re looking for those men and women who excel in science, technology, engineering and math.” However, the Army may be pricing itself right out of the market. “That three in 10 number that I mentioned, we think that number is headed to two in 10 by 2020,” Batschelet said.
13. **VA is critical to medicine and Vets. Article by VA Secretary Robert A. McDonald.** October 24, 2014, Baltimore Sun,. During preparation for my confirmation as secretary of Veterans Affairs (VA), I was repeatedly asked, “Why doesn’t VA just hand out vouchers allowing veterans to get care wherever they want?” For a department recovering from serious issues involving health care access and scheduling of appointments, that was a legitimate question. [Read more.](#)
14. **VA Wants To Restrict When Vets Can View Disability Claims Online.** via Defense One, [Jordain Carney National Journal](#) October 21, 2014, Veterans Affairs officials want to change when veterans can view some of their medical records online, fearing that some could become violent if they see negative comments and think their disability claims will be denied. Veterans must get a medical exam as part of the process for filing a disability claim for a service-related injury. Within days or weeks of the exam, veterans can see the doctor’s forms or notes by using the “Blue Button” on My HealtheVet, the VA’s website for health records. [Read more.](#)

15. **VA Launches New Study On Care.** MOAA, October 17, 2014 The Veterans Access, Choice and Accountability Act of 2014 (P.L. 113-146) fulfills a MOAA recommendation to Congress and the Administration for an independent commission to assess how the VA health system could be improved for our nation's veterans in the 21st century. [Read more.](#)
16. **VA Guarantees its 21 Millionth Home Loan.** October 28, 2014, VA News Release, *Milestone comes during year-long commemoration of 70 years of the GI Bill*, WASHINGTON – The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced this month that it has guaranteed 21 million home loans since the Home Loan Guaranty program was established in 1944 as part of the original Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, better known as the "GI Bill." This achievement comes during the year-long commemoration of 70 years of the "GI Bill," which established a wide range of benefits for Veterans returning from World War II, including low-cost home loans, education and vocational training. [Read more.](#) *Ed Sends – Earlier this year, VA reported that in Seminole County, there were 29,206 VA Guaranteed Home Loans, valued at \$2,626,944,025.*
17. **Federal Benefits Book Updated.** Week of November 10, 2014, *Military.com*, *The Federal Benefits for Veterans, Dependents & Survivors handbook was recently updated -- adding 18 pages of new information. The book is available on the Department of Veterans' Affairs (VA) website.* Ed sends, this office does not yet have the new edition. [Read more.](#)
18. **Flu Shots, Walgreens and the VA.** Press Release, Thursday, October 23, 2014 Veterans enrolled in the VA health care system can get your seasonal flu shot at any VA health care facility and now at any Walgreens that administers them. VA also is covering the cost of about 75,000 flu shots*. To get a seasonal flu shot at Walgreens, you only need to tell the pharmacist you receive care at a VA medical facility and show your VA ID card. [Read more.](#)
19. **VA Demonstrates New Telehealth Scheduling System to Veteran Service Organizations.** News Release from the Veterans Administration. October 23, 2014, *New software system intended to improve Veterans Access to Care*, WASHINGTON – Representatives from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) met today with Veteran Service Organizations (VSO) at the Washington VA Medical Center for a hands-on demonstration and discussion about VA's telehealth programs and services. [Read more.](#)
20. **MILITARY UPDATE: First 'Choice Cards' Mailed to 320,000 Vets Living Far from VA Care.** November 6, *Military.com*, The Department of Veterans Affairs has mailed its first medical "Choice Cards," with letters explaining how to use them, to 320,000 VA-enrolled veterans who reside more than 40 miles from any type of VA medical facility. By late November, another 370,000 vets, those facing waits longer than 30 days for VA appointments, will be the second group to get the cards, said Dr. James Tuchschildt, VA's acting principal deputy under secretary for health. [Read more.](#)

21. **TRICARE Meets ACA Requirements.** Via Military.com, Week of October 20, 2014, Almost all TRICARE plan options meet Affordable Care Act requirements for minimum essential coverage (MEC); however, people who are losing TRICARE eligibility, or transitioning to a new type of TRICARE coverage, need to know their options so they avoid any penalties for not having minimum essential health coverage under the ACA. People who are eligible for premium-free TRICARE Standard as well as TRICARE for Life meet the act's MEC requirement. [Read more.](#)
22. **Some Seek to Rename PTSD.** via Military.com, Week of October 20, 2014, Physicians Eugene Lipov, M.D. (developer of Stellate Ganglion Block for treatment of PTSD) and Frank Ochberg, M.D. Of East Lansing, Mich. agree that the word "disorder," when associated with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), completely misses the mark because the condition is medically and technically a biological phenomenon. In recent years, Dr. Ochberg has led a movement to drop "disorder" and replace it with "injury," essentially rebranding the acronym as Post-Traumatic Stress Injury (PTSI). [Read more.](#)
23. **TRICARE and Mental Health.** Military.com, Week of October 27, 2014, Mental health disorders are treatable. The burden from most mental health concerns can be decreased by actively participating in an individual treatment plan. TRICARE covers mental health care that is medically or psychologically necessary. [Read more.](#)
24. **Court Rules Wearing Unearned Medals Is a Crime.** Stars and Stripes | Oct 31, 2014, Lying about receiving a military medal is protected speech, but there's no right to wear a combat decoration that hasn't been earned, a federal appeals court said Wednesday. [Read more.](#)
25. **Five Retirement Myths.** USAA via Military.com, Week of November 3, 2014, Do you dream of the day you can retire, but aren't sure how to get there? You're not alone. Many people find it easier to avoid reality when it comes to planning for retirement. "That can lead to big mistakes in their [retirement income planning](#)," says Kevin O'Fee, assistant vice president of retirement strategy at USAA. Here's a look at five common myths that could derail your expectations for income when you retire. [Read more.](#)
26. **Reminder: Take Care Connecting Online.** Week of November 03, 2014, According to Homeland Security, cyber security begins with a simple message that everyone using the Internet can adopt: Stop. Think. Connect. [Read more.](#)

27. **TRICARE Warns of Scam.** Military.com, Week of October 27, 2014, TRICARE is warning beneficiaries of the need to be aware of a telephone scam affecting beneficiaries older than 65 and on Medicare nationwide. A caller will usually identify themselves as being an official Medicare vendor, and will then offer to sell beneficiaries back braces. Do not give any personal identifiable information, such as birth date, Social Security number or banking information if you receive such a call. TRICARE representatives never ask beneficiaries for this information, [Read more.](#)
28. **Beware of Medicare Scammers.** via Military.com, Week of October 20, 2014, The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) reports that some scammers claimed to be calling on behalf of the government to verify information for a new Medicare card or Medicare-related package. In fact, it was a ruse to get people's bank account information to make unauthorized withdrawals from their accounts. The callers said they needed to verify people's identities using information that included the consumers' bank account numbers. [Read more.](#)
29. **Obtain Free and Unbiased Health Insurance Counseling.** SHINE (Serving Health Insurance Needs of Elders) is a free program offered by the Florida Department of Elder Affairs and your local Area Agency on Aging. Specially trained volunteers can assist you with your Medicare, Medicaid, and health insurance questions by providing one-on-one counseling and information. SHINE services are free, unbiased, and confidential. <http://floridashine.org/>
30. **COLA WATCH.** MOAA, October 24, 2014, It's official: the 2014 cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for military retired pay, SBP annuities, Social Security checks, and VA disability and survivor benefits will be 1.7 percent, effective December 1, 2014. It will first appear in the January checks, paid on December 31. The Consumer Price Index increased 0.1 percent in September to 234.170. The 1.7 percent 2014 COLA represents a slight increase over last year's 1.5 percent increase. [Read more.](#)
31. **DoD State Liaisons Key Quality of Life issues for 2015.** MOAA, Oct 10, 2014, The [Department of Defense State Liaison Office \(DSLO\)](#) works to educate your state policymakers and other stakeholders about the challenges and issues faced by service members and their families - [Read more.](#)
32. **What is Continuing Resolution and Why is it Necessary?** via Military.com, Week of October 20, 2014, The term "continuing resolution" is one that you hear more and more in recent years in conjunction with legislative news. Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) has received questions about what the term means and why it has become a regular feature of the legislative process. Despite its ubiquity in modern times, the legislative procedure is not a new invention. Read more about it on MOAA's Battle of the Bilge blog: www.moaa.org/MRCR.

33. **New Study Looks at Transition.** *via Military.com, Week of October 20, 2014, A newly-published survey entitled 'The State of the American Veteran: The Los Angeles County Veterans Study' breaks new ground in detailing the challenges of transitioning from military duty to civilian life. The study found that half the surveyed veterans reported a significant physical or mental health issue for which they are not receiving care, and 45.8 percent of post-9/11 veterans screened positive for depression and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). More than two-thirds of the veterans surveyed reported difficulties adjusting to civilian life, and not knowing where to go or whom to contact for help. [Read more.](#)*
34. **Remember to Update DEERS.** *via Military.com, Week of October 20, 2014, Make sure that your records in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS) are up to date with your latest life events. This means you should keep all your personal information -- address, duty status, phone numbers, and email addresses -- up-to-date. Review DEERS as soon as possible whenever you move or experience one of the following life events; (1) activation, (2) deactivation, (3) separation or retirement, and (4) becoming Medicare eligible. Changing your contact information in DEERS is easy and can be done online at milConnect at www.dmdc.osd.mil/milconnect, by fax or mail, or in person at the nearest uniformed services identification (ID) card office. You can find your nearest ID card offices online with the RAPIDS Site Locator at www.dmdc.osd.mil/rsl.*
35. **RecruitMilitary Veteran Career Fair.** Central Florida Fair & Expo Park, 4603 W. Colonial Dr., Orlando, FL 32808. Thursday, December 11, 2014 from 11:00 AM - 3:00 PM. These events provide many great career options for veterans and their spouses. The companies attending have hundreds of positions they are recruiting for and many more companies will be added in the weeks ahead. [Read more.](#)
36. **Teach for America Wants Veterans.** *via Military.com, Week of October 20, 2014, Teach For America, the nonprofit organization that sends recent college graduates and professionals to teaching positions at low-income schools, wants to enlist military veterans into its ranks. [Read more.](#)*
37. **Top Seven Jobs for Retirees.** *Military.com, Week of November 03, 2014, Investopedia recently did some research and came up with seven top jobs for retirees: [Read more.](#)*
38. **What to do When Voc-Rehab Says No.** *via Military.com, Week of October 20, 2014, The VA has taken a stronger stance on meeting veteran's needs, but some may continue to find the path to getting tuition approval difficult. There are some concrete ways to help get the help you need. Author and lawyer Ben Krause has developed four strategies to help. [Read more.](#)*

39. This Month in History. (VFW 2015 Calendar)

November 10 – U.S. Marine Corps Established (1775)

November 11 – Veterans Day, Signing of WWI Armistice (1918)

November 21, Grenada Campaign Ended (1983)

Newsletter from your local Seminole County Veterans' Services Office Staff.

**For all the Veterans you know,
shake their hand and thank them for their service;
If you are a Veteran, we as individuals and a Country owe you a debt of gratitude.**

Thank you for your service to our Country!